

health care costs for millions of Americans who are satisfied with their current health care coverage. It cuts Medicare and reduces benefits for seniors, such as Medicare Advantage, and will raise taxes on families and small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, we all agree that our health care system can be and should be improved; but, unfortunately, Members of Congress are not listening to the American people, and that is, more government is not the answer.

#### HEALTH INSURANCE FROM THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Republicans are craven in their obeisance to their health industry patrons who are so generous at campaign time. They are saying that they're going to offer a new national policy; they're going to free up the insurance industries to offer new national policies with no antitrust law from the Federal Government, no regulation by the States. They've come up with a new loophole for abuses. They have defined on page 122 of their bill, the Northern Mariana Islands—that is Jack Abramoff's lobby client—with their sweat shops and sex shops as a State so insurance companies can go to the Northern Mariana Islands and the only consumer protections that will apply for a policy you buy—one of these new, great, cheap national policies—will be the laws of the Mariana Islands. Buy a policy in Oregon, call the Mariana Islands insurance commissioner, whoever that might be—maybe Jack Abramoff when he gets out of jail—and they'll help you out.

#### HEALTH CARE

(Mr. NEUGEBAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the American people from across the country came to the people's House to oppose a government takeover of their health care. They said, Washington, no politician or bureaucrat should interfere with our choice. And I agree.

My colleagues and I have an answer for their calls by putting forward a commonsense reform, legislation that reduces the deficit, lowers the insurance premiums and improves coverage for those with preexisting conditions. As a result of the House Republican bill, the CBO now confirms that families will see their health care premium reduced by 10 percent. Hardworking taxpayers can expect deficits to decrease by \$68 billion in the next decade.

The American people deserve choice. One size fits all does not work for them. Speaker PELOSI, the American people have said one thing yesterday. I hope you were listening. They said, Kill this bill.

#### TORT REFORM WOULD PAY FOR UNINSURED

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Budget Office has determined that tort reform would save Americans \$54 billion over the next decade. But reducing frivolous lawsuits against doctors and hospitals is not in the health care bill. That is because, according to former Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean, White House officials "don't want to take on the trial lawyers." Tort reform eliminates the billions of dollars spent on meritless lawsuits and defensive medicine.

If Congress enacted tort reform, we could then provide catastrophic health care coverage to the long-term low-income uninsured. To reduce health care costs and help the uninsured, tort reform should be the first item in any health care bill.

#### HEALTH CARE

(Mr. SCALISE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, Speaker PELOSI's latest attempt at a government takeover of health care adds an extra \$730 billion in new taxes onto the backs of American small businesses and families. It cuts \$500 billion out of Medicare, which our seniors know is only going to lead to rationed care for them, and it will take away another 5.5 million jobs out of our economy.

You wonder, today, on the day that we broke the 10 percent mark that President Obama set right here when the stimulus bill was passed, the bill that he said would stop unemployment from exceeding 8 percent, unemployment went to 10.2 percent. Now that we're over 10 percent, when are the liberals running Congress going to realize that it's their policies, it's their taxing, it's their spending, cap-and-trade, card check. It's policy after policy that puts a target on the backs of business, and it is running millions of jobs out of this economy. When will it stop and they actually go and work with us Republicans who want to put commonsense reforms in place to lower the cost of health care and avoid preexisting conditions?

#### PELOSI-CARE KILLS JOBS

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, this morning we received grim news. More Americans have lost their jobs, and we now see the unemployment rate at 10.2 percent, the highest in over 25 years. The stimulus bill has done little to prevent rising unemployment, only creating a

handful of jobs in each of our congressional districts. Only 67 in mine, in the 16th Congressional District of Pennsylvania.

Now, instead of concentrating on how we can restart our economic engine, we start to consider a health care bill that could cost millions of more Americans their jobs in the next decade. Ways and Means Committee staff, working with the Congressional Budget Office and Joint Tax Committee figures, estimate that Speaker PELOSI's bill could cost 5.5 million American jobs over the next 10 years. It is inconceivable that this House will consider killing jobs during a recession.

A government takeover of health care will only employ more tax collectors and bureaucrats. We need real health care reform, the kind that focuses on reducing costs, improving quality of care and expanding access.

#### CLOSED HEALTH CARE RULE

(Mrs. BIGGERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that Republicans continue to offer constructive ideas to improve the health care bill, Democrats still insist that we are the party of "no." Earlier today I submitted an amendment to improve the Medicare waste, fraud and abuse enforcement provisions in H.R. 3962, and Democrats will say "no" to even allowing my amendment to get an up-or-down vote.

According to a recent report by "60 Minutes," Medicare loses over \$60 billion a year to fraud. My amendment would strengthen the Medicare enrollment process, expand certain standards of participation and reduce erroneous payments. There is no excuse for continuing to make payments to empty buildings and businesses that have never existed.

Mr. Speaker, this closed process has prevented me and many of my colleagues, both Republicans and Democrats, from offering intelligent and well-constructed amendments that would save taxpayers money and improve health care access for all Americans.

I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this government takeover of health care.

#### HEALTH CARE

(Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Our President said, "Our health care is too costly," and I agree. Yet before us in Washington are bills that tax wheelchairs, heart monitors, pacemakers and your insurance. These taxes make a family's health insurance cost \$4,000 more. The President said that defensive medicine may be contributing to unnecessary costs, and I agree with the

President. But the House bill coming up will block tort reform. As a candidate, the President said that we shouldn't underestimate the amount of money that can be saved in the current health care system. I agree. But these bills will cut Medicare by \$500 billion and eliminate disease management programs and other programs that could save money.

This bill doesn't fix our health care system. It finances it. It is not too late to reform Medicare, reform Medicaid, reform health care, cut the waste and improve quality. Let people buy across State lines. Let them join groups. Make insurance personal, portable and permanent. Millions are asking us to fix health care, but they want us to do it right. Millions of Americans can't all be wrong.

#### HEALTH CARE

(Mr. GINGREY of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I oppose the government takeover of our Nation's health care system. The Democratic legislation, a 1,990-page \$1 trillion bill will raise taxes, it will increase our national debt, and it will put government bureaucrats between patients and their doctors. I agree it's important to reform our health care system, but this is not the way to do it.

I've spent the last 10 months trying to share my perspective as a physician with over 30 years' experience. My constituents and millions of Americans across this country have also spent the last 10 months trying to make their voices heard by the President and the Democratic majority. This legislation that the Democrats want us to vote on suggests that the Speaker just doesn't care what practicing physicians and the American public think.

This legislation is the wrong direction for America, and it's a death knell for quality care for American patients. Mr. Speaker, I reject any government takeover of our Nation's health care system.

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#### HEALTH CARE

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to a letter from the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. It concisely sums up many of the problems in the Pelosi health care bill for our small family farms.

According to the letter, "The employer mandate and 8 percent payroll tax will place an enormous burden on a significant portion of agriculture and its related industry. Although some tax incentives are provided in the legislation, farmers are price-takers, not

price-makers. They do not have the option of merely passing along those mandated costs."

The letter continues, "It is concerning that there are no allowances for seasonal workers. Requiring coverage for seasonal workers would have significantly adverse economic effects on many farmers across this country."

And finally, "Our Nation cannot afford the projected costs of H.R. 3962, especially considering the growing deficits and other fiscal calamities with entitlement programs that must be dealt with in the immediate future."

This legislation makes little sense when many farmers around the country are struggling with high feed costs, unsustainable energy prices, and a difficult national economy. I urge my colleagues to reject H.R. 3962.

#### HEALTH CARE

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Speaker of the House cares about all Americans. She cares about all Americans because we have worked together as a team. It's not the Pelosi bill; it's the bill that responds to America's needs. And I'm proud of our Speaker and this Congress and those who will make the right decision tomorrow.

I imagine if you were here in 1965 when President Johnson had the vision and the wisdom to formulate the strategy for Medicare in collaboration with that Congress, you could hear the sound, echoing sound of the naysayers, "no, no, no." But in none of our town hall meetings did one person stand up and say, "I'll give away our Medicare."

So tomorrow we will give seniors what they know and understand: saving a buck, closing the doughnut hole, providing no pay for preventative coverage, helping low-cost seniors. And one of the things that we will do is those States, like the State of Texas, who don't do their job as it relates to providing for the uninsured, because Texas stands at the number one State of uninsured and Houston is the number one city, we have got to fix it for those people who are in need.

Vote the right way tomorrow.

#### HEALTH CARE

(Mr. McKEON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to Speaker PELOSI's 2,032, and growing, page health care bill.

Today we are at the highest unemployment level since 1983. The American people can't afford these massive new spending increases, and I refuse to pass them on to my children and grandchildren.

This legislation will immediately increase taxes on American families and

small businesses by \$729 billion. The total bill will cost over a trillion dollars over the next decade, with money we don't have.

And what do the American people get for all this new spending? A bill that you pay for now but doesn't give coverage for 4 years.

Republicans have real solutions for improving access and affordability for American health care. We support tort reform to eliminate frivolous lawsuits. We support allowing negotiating across State lines and group purchasing power. We support choice of coverage without the government's forcing people into government-run health care.

Oppose the Pelosi health care bill.

#### HEALTH CARE

(Ms. FALLIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FALLIN. Mr. Speaker, if we pass Speaker PELOSI's 1,990-page bill, which creates a massive new Federal bureaucracy to manage our health care system, States will face huge unfunded mandates.

The \$34 billion worth of unfunded mandates to the States in this bill might help hide the true cost of this \$1.3 trillion legislation, but the truth is the States will be picking up a lot of these costs. And the only way States could deal with the increased costs and the unfunded mandates would be to look at raising taxes on small businesses and on individuals, and that is unacceptable.

Speaker PELOSI may be all right with increasing the national debt and spending up to \$1.4 trillion on this legislation, but when the bill comes due, the children of America and their children will be the ones who will be paying a hefty price for reckless spending in this Congress.

It is estimated that this Pelosi health care bill will cost Oklahoma \$127 million a year in unfunded mandates. In our State of Oklahoma, we're required to balance our budget each year.

Let's kill this bill because it will be bad for the States and bad for unfunded State mandates.

#### THE GOP HEALTH CARE PLAN

(Mrs. LUMMIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Speaker, while earlier this week the Wall Street Journal called the Pelosi health care plan "the worst bill ever," the Chicago Tribune last week called the GOP plan a good plan and said, "We don't agree with everything in these bills but we do agree with ideas such as these:

"Let insurers sell policies across State lines. That would loosen the strangling State-by-State regulations and unleash competition to drive premium prices down." And, indeed, that